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## #2 Success Story – Mali Finance

### Success in Planning with Mali Finance and the Impact of the Micro Plan Training

Mali Finance built the capacities of agribusinesses in "entrepreneurial spirit and management" enabling them to develop their own businesses and to engage in business plan development. The Micro Plan training course organized by Making Cents in Ségou from April 22 to 29, 2005 is an example of one of the many "business development services (BDS)" provided within the activities of Mali Finance's BDS component. Thirty four (34) members, including 20 women, from private and association businesses with 3 to 16 years of experience, took the training course.

The Micro Plan training is interactive with four modules: business fundamentals, simulation of businesses, business planning and development of business ideas. The training helps to develop business and financial management skills as well as basic skills for business plan development. It was selected for strategic and methodological reasons because it is a unifying action that fosters direct linkage between agro entrepreneurs and BDS, their service provider.



The sales shop open downtown Segou is run by the women of the association.



Mali Finance changed the life of women in a network of over thirty associations in Ségou. Sales doubled after completing and applying the MicroPlan principles.

Mrs. Sylla Ballelé Touré, a food processor of the *Bamananton* association created in 2002, took the Micro Plan training course which proved so useful to her and the association since she shared her newly acquired skills with the other members. Before the training, she was involved in onion drying only.

Mrs. Sylla clearly understood the diversification strategy which led her to consider other commodities such as tomato, parsley,

ginger, carrot, celery and fruits. She went as far initiating her own businesses parallel to those of her association by producing dried fonio, *djouka*, *dégué* and meat.

Mrs. Sylla, speaking on behalf of the other members of the network, said: *"the greatest success of this training for us is planning - we will not start anything any more before planning it."*

Since taking the training Mrs. Sylla more and better products: *"Thanks to Mali Finance, I have increased my income because I do more outreach with my customers and I use radio publicity. Buyers are more attracted to the presentation of the products which are now more detailed and professional."*, she confessed.

The association had never previously applied for a loan and kept its money in CAMEC, a small bank: The saleswoman at the shop were paid monthly.

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Mrs. Kanté Aiché Coulibaly, another recipient of the Micro Plan training course, is registered with the 100-member *"Sigida Niètaga"* association which is controlling 20 hectares of land for rice farming. She has been implementing the skills she received through the Micro Plan training while sharing them with the other members of her association.

Mrs. Kanté declared: *"Mali Finance's training revolutionized our sale of rice. We now store rice with the Office du Niger and wait until prices go up to sell it. The association is now keeping accounts where all transactions are recorded. We are making profit thanks to planning which we never did before."*

Thanks to Mali Finance's Micro Plan training, Mrs. Kanté Aiché Coulibaly was able to qualify for a grant from PASAOP with profits now paid into savings accounts with Nyèsigiso and BNDA.

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**The production and marketing of rice has become even more profitable since the Micro Plan training.**

For over twenty years now, Mr. Ousmane Niangado has been engaged in animal fattening, working independently. On a recommendation by Mr. Rene Alphonse, the president of the Livestock sub sector association, MaliFinance was introduced to Mr. Niangado.



He received training as a result of the introduction, a pride for him which he expressed clearly: *"Mali Finance's training was very positive for me as it allowed me to acquire so many skills. I'm involving my sons in my activities and I pay them for each head of cattle sold. They will be entitled to a monthly salary as soon as I secure a loan from a financial institution. I relied heavily on Mali Finance to help me to develop my business plan and to get a loan from a bank."*

**Mr. Ousmane Niangado, a cattle breeder**

Mr. Niangado keeps his profits in a savings account with BNDA.

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Thanks to Mali Finance's Micro Plan training, "BEE BA", an Economic Interest Group (GIE in French), successfully diversified to soap manufacturing and city sanitation. With the assistance of Fanta Madi Diakité of G FORCE, a trainer who received training through Mali Finance, the women-owned GIE "BEE BA", specialized in carpet manufacturing, was created in 1998 and is being operated by six women and one man.

The Micro Plan training came at the right time since the GIE had not been able to expand.



Mrs. Joséphine Marie Traoré, promoter said: *"Our income generation activities were much slower than our other responsibilities. . Making a standard size carpet would take us 4 hours of labor per day during 5 days for three to four months. The members of the Bee Ba are women with families who could only come to the workshop in the afternoon. Thanks to the training, we are manufacturing soap and doing district sanitation. All our activities (expenditures and purchases) are planned and recorded in an accounts book."*

Resulting from the training BEE BA has opened accounts with Nyèsigiso and BNDA.



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Thanks to Mali Finance's Micro Plan training, 25 women from the *Jèkabara* Agro Industry association of Pelengana have increased their incomes.

Before Mali Finance training, each member contributed 500 FCFA each Friday, to buy the raw materials and to pay the rent.. The Mali Finance training enabled them to widen the scope of their activities. Before they were engaged in drying onions, pineapples, mangos and vegetables. They have now added to those items, soap manufacturing, and the processing of fonio and meat.



**Mrs. Sidibé Moussocoro, food processor and president of the association.**

Mrs. Sidibé Moussocoro Coulibaly, a food processor based in Ségou, is the president of association. She had this to say: *"Before the training, the association would find it difficult to meet expenses. We are now keeping accounts and we plan all activities. With the profit we make we can even afford to pay a consultant to conduct training on soap manufacturing techniques. The training also enabled us to improve the packing and labeling. I wish there will be other training sessions devoted to processing and marketing techniques as well as a monitoring of our activities by Mali Finance. I look*

*forward to Mali Finance's assistance in the field of support and training and the building of the capacities of other members of the association."*

Mrs. Sidibe recently traveled to Senegal to attend an exhibition fair where she presented her dried meat. She not only sold everything, but also took orders for future sales.: *"After calculating all the expenses, I realized I made a profit of about \$100 so I am very happy about this training."*

Thanks to her good management of the association's activities in, Mrs. Sidibé has now created her own communications small business under which she handles the entire logistical aspects of trainings and seminars.

